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Algonquin Highlands budget page 9 Minden fire bylaw page 13 Sports Hall of Fame page 14

Spring fever
The Minden Skating Club put their best foot forward during their annual Spring Gala held this past weekend. For more photos, see inside this edition. /TIM YANO staff photographer

A splash of paint for Minden

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

Downtown Minden is about to get a fresh facelift, and not just because spring is in the air.

The Minden Business Working Group, a steering committee of 20 individuals with ties to the community, have put out a call to bolster interest in beautifying the downtown core.

"Our focus is on the main street," said Dave Woodcroft, a member of the committee, "and then we plan on moving out in baby steps."

Mostly comprised of Minden business owners, the working group has had a handful of meetings within the community so far, with a specific focus on tangible improvements to enhance the downtown destination. "You have to give people a reason to want to stay," said Woodcroft. "We have to start with where we have the most bang for our buck."

With a desired date of early April, the working group is in the process of

see COMMUNITY page 12

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An ice day to be outside

Pinestone Resort and Conference Centre hosted the second local weekend of Ice Oval Racing with the Ontario Snowmobile Oval Racers (OSOR), and chilly conditions with sunny skies made for a memorable weekend for all in attendance. /TIM YANO staff photographer

Landfill security pilot program to launch in Haliburton

ADAM FRISK

Journalist

Concerns about nightly trespassing and illegal scavenging at local landfills led to a heated debate at last week's Dysart council meeting, resulting in a scaled-back plan to test security cameras at a single disposal site.

While environmental staff initially requested a $30,000 budget to upgrade security at the Haliburton, West Guilford, and Kennisis Lake waste disposal sites, council ultimately voted to approve a $6,000 pilot project specifically for the Haliburton landfill.

Environment manger Ashley Dembinski explained to council that there has been a surge in after-hours activity, and that the Haliburton and West Guilford sites face "almost nightly" visits from trespassers who climb over gates or enter through snowmobile trails and wooded areas.

Dembinski highlighted in her report to council that individuals frequently scavenge through scrap metal, electronics, and clothing donation bins, taking revenue-generating materials. She also raised staff safety concerns, noting that employees often encounter unauthorized individuals while opening the sites early in the morning. She noted that on Jan. 7, police were called to the Haliburton site after a manager witnessed several individuals on-site overnight. The incident resulted in at least one arrest.

The pitch for a $30,000 budget reallocation was met with pushback from the elected officials. Several councillors questioned whether the cameras would actually lead to prosecutions or simply serve as an expensive, ineffective deterrent."How far do we have to go here, and how much money do we have to spend?" Mayor Murray Fearrey asked, noting that $30,000 is a significant investment if it fails to stop the problem.

Councillor Carm Sawyer pointed to the history of enforcement and that past attempts to identify illegal dumpers through mail found in the trash resulted in little to no action.

Dembinski argued that cameras would allow for better enforcement under existing waste management bylaws.

"I definitely think we could generate some great revenue enforcing illegal dumping and trespassing," she told council.

Rather than approving the full three-site upgrade, council decided to start small with the Haliburton landfill acting as a pilot project.

A maximum of $6,000 was approved, and money will be reallocated from the approved 2026 cover budget. Council indicated they would be willing to reconsider the other sites if the Haliburton pilot proves successful in identifying trespassers and aiding in enforcement.

Sawyer requested a monthly activity report once the cameras are installed.

Third party reviewing land for development, updates to follow

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

The topic of a subdivision and condominium with frontage on Benoir Lake Road and Elephant Lake has officially come to the County Council table.

Spanning a geographical distance of 122 vacant hectares, the proposal would be comprised of 25 residential lots, 38 resource-based recreation (cottage) lots, and three blocks for waterfront access and condominium roads.

The lands contain Provincially Significant Wetlands, watercourses, and regulatory floodplain areas, creating significant environmental constraints, noted Elizabeth Purcell, the director of planning for the County, during a regular meeting of County Council members on Feb. 25, held virtually. With the first archaeological study taking place in May of 2021, the long-discussed property has since received 13 additional studies, including lakeshore capacity in 2023, stormwater management in 2024, and multiple environmental impact studies in 2025, to name a few.

"These materials are in the process of being reviewed by third parties for technical and legislative compliance," confirmed Purcell.

The project has been in the works for years, with the Toronto-based company, NF 95 Developments, taking the lead on the proposed 'Algonquin Gardens'. In September of last year, Dysart council unanimously shot down the developments proposed for the "North Phase" of the build, which would require amendments to the Official Plan.

The decision has since been appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal, where it is currently residing.

At this stage in the game, County staff are working with a third party in an effort to pick through each of the technical studies provided up to this time. From that point, they will be equipped to provide a recommendation to County Council, said Purcell.

"There's been a lot of public interest in these applications," noted Purcell. "All comments received up to a decision being made on the application will be provided to council, and included with future staff reports, as well as being taken into consideration with any recommendation brought forward."

In 2022, the Planning Act removed the requirement for public meetings for subdivisions, to which Purcell noted that if individuals would like their voices heard, it's best to submit that information in writing when possible. Her email is: epurcell@haliburtoncounty.ca or phone: 705-286-1333 ext. 222.

Councillor Jennifer Dailloux, the deputy mayor for Algonquin Highlands, inquired about the topic of the sensitive wetlands. "Could you tell us more about the enforcement of that?" she asked, referencing the lands not being accessed on-route to the shorelines. "Who would be responsible, how often would they be checking?"

"It's a bit of a precarious situation," confirmed Purcell. "A lot of people would like to access the water from their own lot." She added that enforcement would have to either be implemented through the Municipality of Dysart, or the province, considering it's a Provincially Significant Wetland.

Dailloux inquired directly to the representatives from Dysart who sit on County Council, Mayor Murray Fearrey and Deputy Mayor Walt McKechnie, about how they would handle enforcement of the land. "That's one of the reasons we turned it down, Jennifer," answered Fearrey. "We can't handle this. And if they get this approved, we might as well forget about trying to protect our lakes and our wetlands, it's just a terrible, terrible proposal. We're going to fight as hard as we can to make sure it gets defeated."

The report was received as information. A future recommendation will be made by County staff once information is received from third party considerations of the technical reports.

Students face suspension if records not up to date; Health Unit

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

Parents and guardians of students in Grades 2 and 11 will need to ensure that all their immunization records are up to date.

If records are not updated for these students by March 31, suspensions will start taking place.

Lakelands Public Health, formerly known as Haliburton, Kawartha, and Pine Ridge Health Unit, serves the County of Haliburton, the City of Kawartha Lakes, Northumberland County, and the City and County of Peterborough.

On Feb. 11, Lakelands sent out a public media release, notifying parents and guardians of the upcoming deadline for required proof of vaccinations.

Currently, there are nine key preventable diseases that are covered in basic immunizations: diphtheria, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, meningococcal disease, pertussis (whooping cough), and varicella (chickenpox, for those born in 2010 or later).

> ***"Immunization information is not automatically shared by healthcare providers, so it is the responsibility of parents and guardians to ensure Lakelands Public Health is informed of any updates."***
>
> — Marianne Rock

"Most of these are given as children," said Marianne Rock, manager of vaccine and preventable diseases from Lakelands Public Health. "But they are often rolled together. One vaccine can cover five of these preventable diseases, and that's a good thing."

Rock noted that she and her team have observed a heightened anxiety around vaccines since the COVID-19 pandemic, but communications and transparency are key elements of education around the topic. "We don't see these vaccine-preventable diseases anymore," she said, "and that's because of the vaccines."

But at the end of the day, Rock recognizes that parents or guardians may have questions around the vaccines. "Parents are trying to make the best decisions for their kids," she said, "and we know there is a lot of misinformation out there … Social media can play a huge part in influencing decisions. But we know vaccines are safe, and we know they are effective."

Rock referenced the 'herd immunity' strategy for negating a potentially dangerous disease. "Vaccines are the best way to protect people against diseases," she said, "but not everyone can get them." She noted that some may be immunocompromised, or have allergies to specific medications. "Herd immunity operates at a large scale," said Rock, "so that those people end up being indirectly protected, because the herd has a large amount of protection."

Out of the many regions that Lakelands Public Health covers, it was noted that only about 800 to 900 students do not have their vaccine records updated. "It's important for parents and guardians to report their child's immunization updates directly to Lakelands Public Health," said Rock. "Immunization information is not automatically shared by healthcare providers, so it is the responsibility of parents and guardians to ensure Lakelands Public Health is informed of any updates."

When it comes to confirming records, there are three options for students: vaccine exemption based on a medical condition, vaccine exemption based on philosophical/religious beliefs, or the option to opt into receiving the vaccine. "For the majority of the students, we just don't have a record for them," confirmed Rock, noting that medical offices do not automatically submit information to Lakelands Public Health; that is the responsibility of the parent.

If the records are not updated by March 31, students will begin to face suspension, as mandated by provincial legislation. "We try really hard to work with the parent communities and our school partner communities," said Rock. "It really does take a village."

And while there may be some looming questions around vaccines, Rock strongly encourages parents and guardians to connect directly with Lakelands Public Health: www.lakelandsph.ca.

"We know people have questions," said Rock. "They can call and speak to a nurse, and they won't try to convince you one way or another. It's just an opportunity to open that door for a conversation."

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‘Climate proofing’ the glades at Glebe Park

ADAM FRISK

Journalist

While many outdoor enthusiasts are at the mercy of the forecast, the Haliburton Highlands Nordic Trails Association (HHNTA) took matters into its own hands.

Thanks to a $105,700 provincial grant, approved last October, the club completed a massive “climate proofing” project at Glebe Park before the start of the ski season, designed to ensure that even a light dusting of snow is enough to get skiers on the trails.

The project, which focused on a roughly four-kilometre centre loop, had yielded immediate results. By smoothing the rugged terrain of the Canadian Shield, the club can now groom and open trails with just 10 centimetres of snow, a significant drop from the 20-centimetre minimum required in previous years.

“By smoothing the trails, the idea was that we would be able to groom with less snow,” HHNTA’s Thom Lambert said in a recent telephone interview. “So we’d be able to groom earlier in the year and also later in the year to extend our season.”

The primary goal of the grant was to address the unique challenges of the local landscape. Because much of Glebe Park sits on solid granite, trail crews cannot simply “level” the ground by moving dirt. So gravel was hauled in by the truckloads.

“So what the gravel does is typically in most places where you have four feet of topsoil to work with, you would just move that topsoil around to smooth your trails out,” Lambert explained. “What we’re dealing with in Glebe Park is quite often zero topsoil. There are significant sections of our trail that literally are just the Canadian Shield.”

The work included elevating the trails with fill so water runs off rather than pooling. New ditching and culverts to prevent “washouts” during the mid-winter thaws and extreme summer weather. And of course, filling low points among the rocks to create a level base for grooming equipment.

Lambert said the work was completed during an intensive five-day period in October by local contractors working 12 hours a day. He estimated that with regular maintenance, the improvements would last at least 10 years.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation awarded the club a grant, which covered all capital costs for machinery and gravel. The project relied heavily on club members, who contributed 250 volunteer hours to prepare the site. This included using backpack leaf blowers to clear organic matter from nearly five kilometres of trail multiple times, allowing contractors to work on bare ground.

The investment had already paid off, Lambert said. In mid-December, Haliburton Highlands Secondary School hosted a Nordic race that would have been impossible in the past. Overall, the club expects the upgrades to add at least two extra weeks of skiing each season by enabling an earlier start and a more resilient base.

On Saturday, the HHNTA hosted its final Jackrabbit event of the season and celebrated the grant and trail improvements. MPP Laurie Scott was on hand for the festivities.

“The Haliburton Highlands Nordic Trails are a treasured destination for residents and visitors alike,” she said. “This capital grant will support important water flow management and sustainable drainage solutions to help maintain skiable conditions while protecting the delicate ecosystems these trails incorporate.”

HHNTA's Joleen Thomas, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock MPP Laurie Scott, and Ontario Trillium Foundation’s Klara Oyler, participate in a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Glebe Park on Saturday. /ADAM FRISK staff

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Council hits ‘pause’ on fee relief for Haliburton Gymnastics

ADAM FRISK

Journalist

The Municipality of Dysart et al Council opted for a “wait and see” approach regarding a request to waive roughly $8,000 in development fees for a new non-profit gymnastics facility in Haliburton Village.

While council members expressed enthusiastic support for the project’s goals, they deferred a final decision during last week’s regular council meeting to investigate technical requirements, specifically the site’s septic capacity.

Kathy Judson, executive director of Haliburton Gymnastics, presented to council a plan for a professional facility at 367 Industrial Park Road. She argued that the club would end the “gymnastics migration” in which families currently drive an hour or more out of town several times a week.

“I would like to keep Haliburton families in Haliburton,” Judson told council. “When they leave Haliburton for sports ... they buy their gas, they buy their groceries ... they get their oil changed. We have the market to make this a leading gymnastics club for our community.”

The project is structured as a non-profit, relying on a $100,000 conditional loan from the Haliburton County Development Corporation and approximately $30,000 raised so far through community donations.

The requested relief includes several municipal fees, like a $5,000 deposit for potential legal and engineering costs, as well as a $1,500 zoning by-law amendment application fee.

“So, I’m here today to ask council if you could kindly consider the challenge I have ahead of me to fund this project for the community and to waive any and all fees that would come from the town,” Judson said.

Staff noted that these fees are not budgeted for within the planning or building departments and would effectively function as a donation if waived.

While the council was “100 per cent for” the benefit to youth, technical details regarding the building and whether the septic system can handle the expected 50-person peak (30 students plus coaches and parents) during class changeovers.

The mayor and council members expressed a desire to avoid promising relief only to have the organization hit with a surprise $40,000 or $50,000 septic replacement bill later.

“I just like to make sure we get this right,” Mayor Murray Fearrey said.

Council voted to defer the request for one month to allow municipal staff from the planning and building departments to review the site and provide a report on whether the existing infrastructure is sufficient for a recreational facility.

Judson noted that while an immediate “yes” would have been helpful for her timeline, she appreciated the council’s willingness to help speed up the staff review.

A Canadian in Milan; a local take on the Women's Olympic game

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

"The energy was really good, but the air was also a bit tense."

That's how one attendee of the women's Olympic gold medal hockey game described the atmosphere at the historical event, where the Canadian team earned silver after an overtime goal.

Lindsey Snelgrove grew up in Haliburton, but now lives and works in Toronto. And for the past year, her life was working towards one significant event: attending the Winter Olympics in Italy.

After nearly three weeks, the Olympic train has now slowed down, and with it, the buzz and energy around celebrating winter sport. But in its place, a newfound sense of patriotism and national pride has floated to the surface once again.

That's one thing that was felt amongst fans at the women's hockey game that Snelgrove described in detail, when she took some time to share her story with this newspaper. "There were a few injuries on the Canadian team, so people were preparing for either outcome, while at the same time hoping for gold," she shared. "We were sitting in a row with both Canadian and U.S.A. fans, and people were all friendly, chatting and excited. While there was light teasing about who would win, generally the atmosphere was that people were just excited for the game."

Snelgrove said that she had purchased the tickets to the Feb. 19 game nearly one full year ago. "It's been a long time coming," she said. "We spent nearly a week in Milan, experiencing different Olympic events and pop-ups, and generally touring the city. There were a lot of people there for one sport or another, and it was really fun to see people from every country supporting their teams in full gear and coordinating colours."

While the environment was largely touristy at the time of the visit, Snelgrove noted that the overall energy was positive and supportive of all athletes and visitors. "It felt generally friendly," she said, "walking through the streets and saying 'hi' to anyone in a Canada hat or jersey. We had other Canadians offer to take pictures for us, some stopped to ask where we were from and what sport we were there to watch, or just wave in passing, smile and continue on their way."

And when it came to the big game? According to Snelgrove, it was a sea of red and white. "It seemed like most of the fans that we saw were Canadian," she said. "The stands were full of red, many flags, and lots of jerseys. We were told that on the stream you could hear the chanting of 'U-S-A' louder than the Canadians, but it didn't feel that way when we were there."

In what was identified as the most watched Women's Olympic event in history, the close-game was a nail-biter, with a score of 1-1 heading into overtime, as the country held its breath.

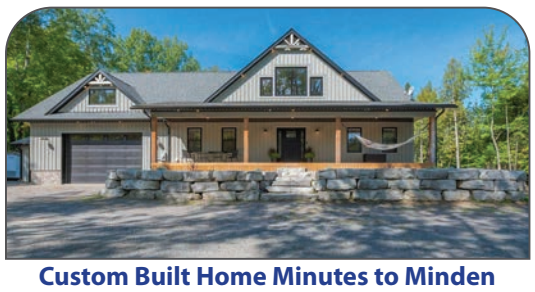
"Overtime was tense," said Snelgrove, noting that the Olympic protocol for overtime play is instant three-on-three, as opposed to a shootout.

Four minutes into the extended play, American Megan Keller sniped a backhand goal. "The rink felt silent after the final goal," said Snelgrove. "American fans cheered, but because it seemed most people were Canadian, it was like someone pushed the mute button and everyone was quieter … just sad or disappointed. A few people left, but generally everyone stayed to support the silver medal for the achievement that it was."

Snelgrove noted that all teams were honoured shortly after the game, with Switzerland's team being called out to receive their bronze medal, and Canada donning silver. "When the teams lined up to shake hands, there were a lot of hugs and tears between the teams, not just amongst teammates," she said. "It wasn't just a casual handshake like I've seen at other games."

Over the 2026 Olympic season, Canada racked up 21 medals in total, with five gold, seven silver, and nine bronze.

Lindsey Snelgrove shared her experience attending the gold medal match between Canada and the United States Women's Hockey teams during the Winter Olympics. /photos submitted by Lindsey Snelgrove



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Published by **White Pine Media Corp**

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Print Subscriptions 1 yr/ $51 (taxes included). Published weekly by White Pine Media
To Subscribe to the Print or Digital edition, email subscriptions@haliburtonpress.com or call 705-457-1037.

Editorial

The helpers

THE WORLD feels difficult, that's no secret.

Unless you are one of the very lucky individuals who is able to stay entirely apolitical, whether that be based on privilege or ambivalence, the waters are tough to wade for most.

During another grey winter day, while the skies opened up to add to our shovelling, I felt down.

Yes, there are feel-good stories coming to the surface. We can't deny those.

But those little snippets of joy aren't large enough to blur the brutality of the big picture. The news that comes at us a mile a minute; decisions at every decibel, choices on every channel.

Emily Stonehouse

Thank goodness for *Mister Rogers*. Even though the show has decades layered on top, my two-year-old son is still drawn to it. The pace, the energy, the storytelling. Even my husband and I catch ourselves getting swept into the Land of Make Believe, with the ever-winding messaging to quite simply be a good person.

The reason I bring up Mister Rogers in an editorial dedicated to Haliburton County, is because of the people who call this place home.

One of my favourite quotes can be attributed to Fred Rogers: *"When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'"*

I saw that, this week. Here, in our little hometown. I had a phone call with the Minden Community Business Working Group, who are drumming up interest and buzz amongst the village for the greater good of redesign.

I sat in on the Haliburton BIA meeting, and noted that every single person in that room wanted to be there to make our community thrive.

I saw a girls' hockey league sprout up, in an effort to ensure women in sports, and offer them a space they felt safe, supported, and seen.

I discussed the Sports Hall of Fame with doers and dreamers from our town who have no direct benefit to celebrating the successes of students and athletes, but believe in the value of legacy and storytelling for future generations.

I spent one full morning with the students at Haliburton Highlands Secondary School, working with their local leadership class; a group of students who have opted into the program to develop activities, experiences, and memories for their classmates, and are writing columns to engage with the community.

Look for the helpers.

They are out there. Whether that be in the not-for-profit world, a volunteering context, an artist who uses their platform to speak, a parent who rallies to care for their kids.

People who choose to make a difference. Who dedicate time, energy, ideas, and heart to the greater good.

So on these grey days, the ones that feel lonely and hopeless and never-ending, just look for the helpers, offering a little warmth, to a very cold world.

Poke, Peel Pair, Ponder

Once more into the fray

THE LAST Telling Our Stories Speakers' Series event pulled a full room of movers and shakers -- as it often does, but this time with an unusual sprinkling of non-grey-hairs. They came to hear the highly entertaining (self-described bi-polar, but engagingly speedy) Dave Meslin bounce off his book *Teardown: Rebuilding Democracy from the Ground Up*.

He gleaned from his book some suggestions that he thought might help Haliburton County in its upcoming municipal elections (in October 2026; nominations open May 1, close August 21).

One idea was that wards -- an urban construct, he said – be eliminated. The primary advantage of this, he said and I agree, is that under these circumstances the candidates for office run for election, not against their opponents. Because the five seats, or however many there are at the council table, go to the five candidates who got the most votes. The conversation at the doorstep or in candidate debates is then about what the candidate is offering, not about how he or she is a better person than their opponent. Because everyone is an opponent.

fay martin

But also everyone may be a person sitting next to you at the council table when you are elected. Where, if sense and experience have anything to teach us, reaching compromise for the greater good has better outcomes than the high-school you're-in-you're-out and gotcha! Social games we often see at play around municipal and county tables.

Serving in municipal office is not like being the Prom King/Queen, where all you have to be is popular and all you have to do is be beautiful/charming.

No. Meslin's point – municipal government manages all the things that bear most closely on daily quality of life. The state of your road, your garbage dump, your social services, your library, your rec centres, your health and education facilities, the ease with which you build your house.

I asked a municipal rep who attended Meslin's presentation if we could eliminate wards in my township during this last year of this council's term. They explained there wasn't time in any case but foreshortened by the dead duck period if there was to be extensive turnover among council.

I asked another municipal rep if in this last year of term we could reduce the number of councillors in order that the per-person stipend increase enough that people of modest means could consider running. They said no, the budget was already set, and besides, we'd lose strong mayor ruling if the number declined.

Wouldn't that be an interesting spin, if a mayor with strong powers were chosen from among the elected? Who do you think can be most trusted with power? Oh, wait, might it be a better idea to share power, devolving it to the person who has the most expertise or is most compelling on a given issue?

Indigenous cultures tended to this structure until colonialism insisted they elect one person to speak for them – and still complains about the inefficiency of having to negotiate First Nations issues with various and overlapping Indigenous authorities. They could instead imagine how citizens feel when we have to negotiate with equally various and overlapping government structures.

But reading in the paper that Premier Ford is suggesting the Niagara Falls municipalities will be 'consolidated' for economic efficiency (kinda like Toronto council, but one hopes not in the middle of the election), it's a distinct possibility that Haliburton will be jackbooted into a single level of municipal governance. It's irrefutable logic but a political third rail locally – the outside 'assistance' we need to make that move may be imminent.

Another of Meslin's ideas was that the voting age be lowered to 16, so that kids could get into the habit of voting while they're still in the familiarity of their own community. That might give rise to some interesting and much-needed intergenerational conversations about community priorities.

The best way to get diversity in provincial and federal government, Meslin said, rather than representation being curated and managed by political parties, would be to randomly select the requisite number of people to represent us. Not a new idea: that's how juries are selected.

That idea tickles the mind, after the knee-jerk relaxes. After all, what is more democratic than probability? People could argue to be excused, as they do from jury duty. Process is less expensive, less time consuming, more nimble in accommodating changes in life circumstances, doesn't result in expensive pensions. And we wouldn't have to clutch our pearls about floor-crossers.

What would we have to do to get to 'yes' on any or all of Dave's outrageous ideas?

Courage and imagination, my friends, nothing more, nothing less.

points of view

Time flies

Loon Tales

Steve Galea

LAST NIGHT, I woke up in the middle of the night, possibly because our cat walked across my forehead. But who can say for sure?

All I know is that, after that, I couldn't sleep, so I picked up my phone and started browsing for something of interest.

Like all men who lay awake in a dark room, I quickly gravitated to an educational article that would enrich my life. But you can only watch so many *how to take revenge on cat* videos, so I eventually moved on.

Which is why, as embarrassing as it is to admit, I found myself reading a scientific article on our memory-based perception of time.

The article suggested that whether we perceive time as moving quickly or crawling forward is based on the amount of information that we process and store in our brains. Essentially, the memories we make.

That is diametrically opposed to my own theory which suggests that how quickly or slowly time moves is generally based on how long the line up to the washroom is.

In any case, the researchers summarized that people, entrenched in their routines, feel that time is racing by because routines are not conducive to making new memories, since the brain has seen it all before.

On the other hand, people who try more exciting, novel or complex experiences in their life create more memories, which make a recollected period seem longer. Although try saying that on a first date and see where it gets you.

This, I suppose, also explains why time drags on when you are forced to eat tofurkey.

The best example given was driving to and from a new place. Most people feel it always takes longer on the way there because everything is new along the route – or because you didn't make a left hand turn when your wife said you should. Conversely, the way back seems shorter because you have seen it all before, plus, if you don't listen this time, you'll never hear the end of it.

The upshot is, if you want to make your periods of your life seem longer and more fulfilled, try novel new things.

What do they mean by novel? Things as simple as taking different routes to the places you routinely visit, experiencing travel, or trying new activities. It could be something as simple as profusely complimenting a local short, balding, middle-aged writer – perhaps even offering him cash to buy more fishing gear with.

Or you could just continue your boring old routine of not doing that. But then you'll watch your life fly by, so that 30 years from now you'll wonder if you ever really lived at all. It's entirely up to you.

As for myself, I'm going to shake up my life so it doesn't pass me by in the blink of an eye. Some of the novel changes I'm enacting: randomly utilizing the phrase "I know you are, but what am I?", and following only 50 per cent of the instructions given to me on Google Maps.

The point is we all need to do new novel things so our brains collect memories that we can, in retrospect, associate with good and productive days.

That way, one day, I can fondly look back from the tail end of my life and say, "Hey, would you look at all this fishing gear?"

pic *of the* **past**

Robertson skidding crew from approximately 1920-30. Second from right, Erastus Robertson, and all others, unknown. If you know the identities of anyone photographed, or have a Pic of the Past you would like to share, please reach out to emily@haliburtonpress.com. /Photo from *Echo* archives

Deep rest

Green meadow

Tales from the great

Lynda Shadbolt

YOU CAN never underestimate the power of silence and stillness - and the profound impact they have on your well-being. In a world that moves quickly and constantly asks for your attention, choosing to pause is a radical act of kindness toward yourself.

The yogis have understood this for more than 5,000 years. At the end of every yoga class, after the stretching, strengthening, balancing, and breathing, there is one final pose: *savasana*, or "corpse pose." While it may look simple from the outside, it is one of the most powerful practices for restoring the body and soothing the nervous system.

After all the movement, yogis lie down on their mats and intentionally set themselves up for deep rest. Savasana works best when certain gentle conditions are in place: silence, stillness, darkness (an eye mask or even a soft towel over the eyes), warmth (a cozy blanket), and complete support for the body. Pillows or bolsters are used so the body can fully let go.

The goal is to create a sense of safety and comfort so the nervous system can soften. Judith Lasater, a beloved yoga teacher for more than 50 years, teaches that when we were in the womb for nine months, we lived in a flexed, curled position. In yoga, this shape resembles Child's Pose, where we gently fold inward. She suggests that to receive the deepest benefit in savasana, we recreate that sense of supported flexion.

A pillow under the head allows the neck to soften forward instead of tipping back. A pillow under the knees lets the lower back gently round and relax. Ideally, the elbows are bent, and the hands rest on pillows so the wrists can soften too. When the body feels held and supported, it no longer needs to brace.

Once you are warm, dark, supported, and still, something beautiful happens. You begin to rest - not just physically, but deep in the centre of your body. The nervous system shifts out of "doing" and into "being." Your heart rate slows. Your breath softens. Muscles unclench. The body repairs and rejuvenates itself. This pose is the opposite of modern culture.

We are constantly surrounded by stimulation - phones, computers, televisions, social media, and endless news cycles. Our attention is pulled outward all day long. In savasana, the opposite occurs. There is no striving. No performing. No achieving.No paying attention to the outer world. You are quiet and still, resting and receiving, simply being with yourself and whatever arises. Ideally, savasana is practiced for at least 20 minutes to give the body and nervous system time to truly settle.

The great news is that you don't have to be in a yoga class to experience this. You can practice deep rest at any time during your day. Turn off your phone. Gather a few pillows and a blanket. Place a small towel over your eyes if you don't have a mask. Let yourself curl gently inward and be supported. Rest is not laziness. It is nourishment. When you allow yourself to truly rest, you refill your own cup. And from that place of fullness - calm, grounded, and restored - you can carry your good energy out into the world. Being kind to yourself in moments of stillness allows you to show up with greater patience, clarity, and compassion. Deep rest is a gift. Give it to yourself often.

letters to the editor

Cameras

Dear Editor,

Cameras don't work unless the culprit is dumb enough to show his licence plate. My brother told us they put a camera at his local "dump" and he so wanted to sneak up behind it and put a pillowcase over it, leave his bag of garbage outside the gate and remove the pillowcase from behind. But he couldn't do that because someone stole the camera!

Shirley McDowell,
Lake Wenona and Scarborough

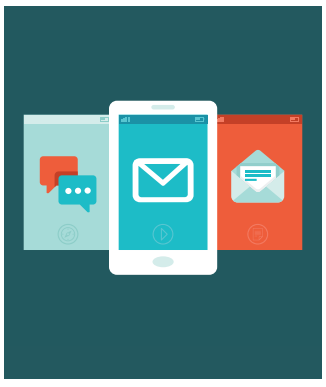
Thanks to Ripple

Dear Editor,

I read an article about Coming Full Circle / Ripple here in Halibulton, and ladies from Eagle Lake Church mentioned they give lunches out Tuesday and Thursday at the Ripple Location in Haliburton. When I first showed up I was in tears, life was overwhelming and I want to share with you that with their help, I'm in a much better mindset and have a much better future outlook since I started attending their drop in services. Allana, Vicki, Angie, David and Richard are some of the most kind and understanding people I've ever met and I can't thank them enough for helping me get back on track with life.

Jason Brain,
Haliburton

Letters to the Editor note: Submissions are subject to editing for newspaper style and punctuation.



Have a thought, comment or opinion you'd like to share?

Send a letter to the editor to
emily@haliburtonpress.com

Minden Memories

This recent acquisition of André Lapine's work was donated by Nancy Jacobi in memory of her father, John, who once traded a Homer Watson (1855–1936) painting for it at Malloney's Art Gallery in Toronto. When asked why the horse was on the "wrong" side of the road, Lapine simply replied, "It was Sunday." /Photo courtesy of the Minden Hills Cultural Centre

Community Coffee House on March 9

Rich Anton, a local musician and CANOE-FM host, will lead a discussion concerning the journey through addiction and the initiative "Coming Full Circle" at the March Community Coffee House taking place on Monday, March 9 from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Schofield Room of the Haliburton Legion, at 719 Mountain St., Haliburton.

Rich, well-known for his love and promotion of the blues and his expertise with the harmonica, will share his experience with addiction and recovery. This has led to his role as a peer support specialist in Haliburton with the "Coming Full Circle" program, an initiative led by Point in Time Centre for Children, Youth and Parents, in partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge (CMHA HKPR) and the Haliburton County Connections Committee, which operates in several locations in Haliburton County. The evening will begin with live music by Peter Smith on the keyboard with guest solos by Rich.

These Coffee House gatherings are open to all, at no admission fee, with light refreshments available. They are hosted by the Baha'i community of Haliburton County, offering live music and presentations to inform and inspire, and providing a space for discussions about how we can make our communities better places.

For further information, please call 416-606-9657.

Submitted

Raffan returns to Speakers Series

The Telling Our Stories Speakers Series is delighted to welcome James Raffan back to the Highlands on Wednesday, March 11th, to present his 1-man musical show called *The Accidental Canadian*. With overtones of the growing "Elbows Up" initiative, *The Accidental Canadian* is a light-hearted yet thought-provoking show for all ages with stories, images and songs animated with James' trademark mix of humour and erudition.

Dr. Raffan is a cultural geographer and writer who has produced more than twenty books and created documentaries on a variety of northern subjects. He has written for film, radio and media outlets including National Geographic, Canadian Geographic, *The Globe and Mail* as well as for CBC. His has also been recognized with nominations and awards for his foundational work in bringing the Canadian Canoe Museum in Peterborough, Ontario onto the national stage.

The Speakers Series, a member of the Haliburton County Community Cooperative, takes place on the second Wednesday of each month from 7 to 9 p.m. Please note: Ticket sales for this presentation have exceeded our regular capacity at the Fish Hatchery, so we are moving to the Haliburton Legion.

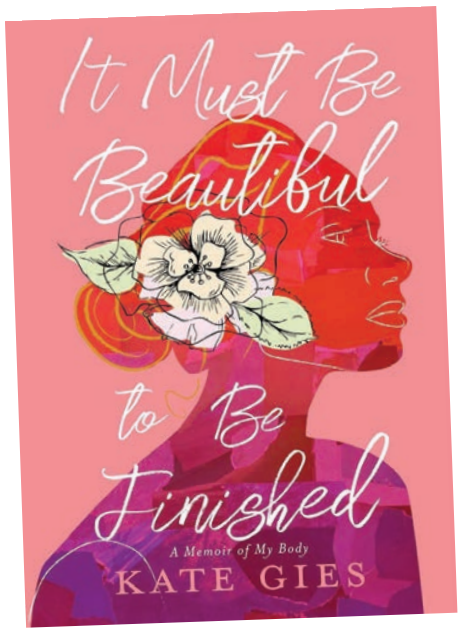
Admission is $15/person. Pre-registration is highly recommended. To obtain tickets, contact Barrie Martin at 705-457-7557 or by email at barrieinthehighlands@gmail.com

Submitted

HALIBURTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Book of the Week

When she was four, a plastic surgeon pressed a synthetic ear to her head and promised he could make her "whole." Over the next nine years, Kate underwent fourteen surgeries - many of them failing - leaving permanent scars on her body. In lyrical vignettes, she recounts how her "disfigured" body was scrutinized, pathologized, and even weaponized, exploring the physical and psychic trauma of medical intervention. At once the story of a girl desperate to be fixed and a woman learning to own her body, this memoir confronts the medical system's role in shaping—and harming—those it deems imperfect.



It Must Be Beautiful to Be Finished by Kate Gies is available to borrow from the Haliburton County Public Library. Visit haliburtonlibrary.ca to place a hold or learn more.

Dorset Tower top of mind during AH budget talks

THOMAS SMITH

Journalist

It is now Algonquin Highlands' time to go through the budget process.

AH council met over two days, Feb. 23 and 24, to receive their budget report prepared by staff and discuss the items on the budget.

The proposed budget includes a proposed municipal tax increase rate of 7.19 per cent. This increase is equivalent to $28 for every $100,000 of assessed property value.

Like many of the municipalities of Haliburton County, OPP policing costs have gone up to 11 per cent, an increase of $111,000. This is also offset by OMPF funding for 2026.

For staff, council approved a three-and-a-half per cent increase in wages for 2026 and a reduction in benefit premium costs.

Some of the highest priority projects discussed included improvements to parking on Big Hawk Lake Road, repairs for Russell and Fletcher Lake Landing, property improvements to various municipal buildings, fire services support, and the Dorset Tower.

One of the first projects to receive lengthy discussion was the Stanhope Municipal Airport.

Adam Thorn, public works manager for AH, told council that repairs to the hangars are the highest priority.

Thorn reported that several people have contacted him to express their doubts regarding the benefit of the airport to the community and that it is a waste of taxpayers' dollars, to which the public works manager voiced his disagreement.

"You may not have an airplane and you may not go to the airport to fly, but your health services, your emergency services, MNR, all those things utilize [it]," said Thorn. "There are quite a few entities that use the airport on a regular basis that affect everybody county-wide."

Melissa Murray, environmental manager for the township reported that waste disposal services have been running smoothly.

"Other municipalities are really impressed with what we can do here, given our small system," said Murray.

Later in the Feb. 23 meeting, council discussed disposition of land to create affordable housing.

Deputy Mayor Dailloux said that a disposition of land is a huge contribution to increase affordable housing,

Councillor Sabrina Richards noted that there was land that was of interest to a developer. With those funds from its sale, the money could purchase land for a non-profit to create affordable housing in AH.

Mayor Liz Danielsen reminded council of the township's property at Maple Lake estates.

"It is my understanding that Habitat (for Humanity) may be interested in those lands," said Richards.

Sean O'Callaghan, planner for AH, reported that he has a meeting with Habitat on what options they have to create affordable housing or lands that can be disposed of from the township.

"Another way that the council can assist is through the waiving of fees," reminded Angie Bird, CAO.

The Dorset Rec Centre is receiving some love in the budget. The centre is set to receive a new projector, kettle balls, resistance bands, hex weights, and a multi-purpose net system that is both easily transportable and compact.

"That would give us the opportunity to start offering volleyball, badminton, and other racquet sports other than just pickleball in the gym," said Chris Card, parks, rec, and trails manager for AH.

The council also discussed replacing the gym's basketball nets with modern hoops and the option to install electronic blinds within the gym to accommodate movie nights.

"Those who have gone to Dorset versus Minden, Dorset is so much better as a gym. That is good to hear," said Richards. "It is really a pittance what the revenues are as opposed to the cost of operating this facility."

Council also discussed the option of offering movie nights.

The subject of the Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers came up, with Councillor Richards not seeing the entire benefit of them.

"I see the environmental benefit, certainly we want to support them. They are costing tax payers substantially," said Richards.

Dailloux responded to this saying that EV chargers are the norm in Europe, with several countries overseas moving towards zero gas emissions in 2026. Whether or not the EV chargers are economical is up in the air.

Another extensive point of discussion was the Dorset Tower. As one of the biggest sources of revenue for the municipality, the tower is an iconic and popular tourist spot. Improvements need to be made at the site including cosmetic concrete fixes for the tower, and both fencing and stair repairs at Peek-A-Boo Rock.

Council got heated regarding the costs of policing involved with hiring the OPP to manage traffic for the tower during the fall.

"Do we really need the OPP to be there, is it that bad," asked Richards.

Dailloux and the other council members agreed that it is needed.

Card says that if they are not paid to be onsite, the OPP would only respond to 911 calls.

In the past, officers were stationed at the entrance check for pre-purchased tickets and improve the flow of traffic. Backups on the highway have resulted in people leaving their vehicle parked on the shoulder of the busy road.

Councillor Barry was persistent that if the municipality is paying 11 per cent more for policing, there is an opportunity for a conversation around Dorset supervision.

CAO Bird said that in the past they attempted to have the conversation with the OPP that did not go anywhere.

Fire Chief Mike French proudly reported to council the success of the AH fire services' training program.

"Within the County, we are the leaders when it comes to technical rescue," said French. "We have really, highly trained volunteers because of our training ground."

New equipment is slated to be purchased, their training grounds are continuing to be developed, a search light will be affixed to their search and rescue boat, and they will conduct attic insulation repairs at Stations 60 and 70.

French was proud to report to council that AH fire services are experts in backwoods, swift water, high-angle, and tower rescue. Estimated costs total $162,000 and will be coming from the fire reserve.

Council will continue to review the first draft of the budget before it is approved.

Razz returns this weekend

Razzamataz is back again with an amazing puppet show that's fun for the whole family!

On Sunday March 8 at 2 p.m., Razzamataz Kids' Shows is presenting, *Old Man and the River* by WeeFestival at the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion in Haliburton. The show features beautifully designed puppets without words, performed along an enchanting musical score.

About the show: A grumpy old man lives in his little house in the woods by the river. Everyday is the same, and he likes it this way - until one day a magical creature leaps into his world and everything changes! With themes of friendship, communication, play and adjusting to change, *Old Man and the River* is perfect for the youngest theatre goer.

Razzamataz Kids' Shows has been working in the community for 40 years bringing high-quality, affordable and culturally diverse theatre to children and families. Show tickets are $7 for a child and $10 for an adult and can be purchased online or in cash, at the door.

Last season Razzamataz created a new initiative, Theatre in Schools, to bring a free performance to a different local elementary school each year; we are addressing income and transportation barriers, to meet kids where they are with professional theatre shows.

On Monday March 9, we will be presenting *Old Man and the River* to Cardiff Elementary and Stuart Baker kindergarten children at the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion. This show is made possible through local sponsorships from Haliburton County Development Corporation, Haliburton Arts Council and Kennisis Lake Cottage Association, Canoe FM and Haliburton Rotary and Haliburton High School.

For more information, to purchase tickets or make a donation, visit razzmatazz.ca.

Submitted

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Haliburton Highlands

Join us for a day dedicated to active and healthy living for seniors! Explore community resources for health, safety, food and nutrition while enjoying presentations, demonstrations and engaging activities.

FEATURING...

- Exhibitors
- Presentations
- Demonstrations
- Prizes!
- Complimentary Light Lunch

FREE EVENT!

REGISTER NOW!

Date: Friday, March 13, 2026

Location: Haliburton Legion Branch 129, 719 Mountain Street

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Registration opens at 8:30am

HaliburtonCounty.ca/SALC

705-286-1333 x 243

SALC@haliburtoncounty.ca

This event is hosted by the County of Haliburton in partnership with Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario OACAO with funding provided by the Government of Ontario.

Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario / Association des centres pour aînés de l'Ontario OACAO The Voice of Older Adult Centres / La voix des centres pour aînés Est. 1973 50 years of service

Funding provided by: Ontario

Success for local teams at OFSAA

KAREN GERVAIS

Guest columnist

The Haliburton Highlands Nordic Ski team travelled to the Ontario Federation of Secondary Athletic Associations (OFSAA) Championships held at Hardwood Hills Ski and Bike in Orillia on February 24 and 25. The rapidly plunging then rising temperatures had skiers wiping frost from their chins, masking their faces with KT tape and coaches scratching their heads about how to wax skis. The temperature dipped low enough Tuesday morning to cause race convenors to shuffle the start order the day before, putting seniors out on the course first instead of junior and para skiers during the coldest part of the day.

That meant Red Hawk skier Violet Humphries, one of the first skiers to travel the 7.6 km Senior course at 10:06 a.m. for the Interval races, faced frigid temperatures hovering around -20°C with a wind chill near -30°C. Despite the cold, Humphries managed to put down a fast time of 27:20.5 to earn a tenth-place finish in the Senior Girls High School Division. OFSAA Nordic Skiing classifies their skiers into two divisions for individual finishes: High School racers that train exclusively with their school team and Open skiers that train and compete with a club.

Ella Gervais was the next finisher for the Hawks in 40th, Olivia Gruppe 53rd, Grace Allder 58th and Ruby Morrison 86th in a field of 117 skiers. This was Morrison's first year learning to cross country ski. As a Senior Girls team, the Hawks finished in 9th place, just one spot out of ribbon position. The team finish is determined by the lowest sum of the top four skiers on a team, but includes both Open and High School skiers from one school.

The sun kept shining with a gradual warming throughout the morning. Senior Boy Evan Backus was the top HHSS finisher, gliding over in the line in 26:52.7 to place 36th. Winston Ramsdale placed 46th, Graham Backus 55th, Carter Sisco 62nd, Brady Hamilton 71st and Owen Megrah-Poppe 79th. The Senior Boys team finished 13th overall in the Interval races.

On the Junior 5.5 km course, which like the Senior course featured lots of challenging climbs and fast corners, Annika Gervais skied to a determined fifth-place finish in High School Girls, fuelled by her success at OFSAA Nordic last year. Her time was 20:40.0. Grade 9 skier Anika Suke crossed the line in 12th and Kailey Hoare was 48th, followed closely by Quinn Hamilton in 51st. Hamilton also donned skis of the cross country kind for the first time this winter. Alternate Leah Allder finished 72nd out of 106 High School skiers. The Junior Girls' performances earned them an eighth-place team finish and a burgundy ribbon.

Junior Boy Red Hawks also proved they were a force on snow. Alex Lee was the top finisher in a time of 19:36.5 placing 15th. Through his steady commitment, Lee has shown tremendous improvement throughout the season. Tristan Humphries followed closely in 18th, Duncan Evans-Fockler 31st and Kip Kelly 33rd. Team alternate and first-year Nordic skier Aren Addison placed 89th out of 120. The Boys' performances earned them a fifth-place finish as a team.

OFSAA Nordic Day Two saw the temperatures swing upwards towards zero creating very soft and slow conditions on the hills in the 4x1km Sprint Relay. Due to the Ontario Winter Games moving in that night, the Junior Girls heats started at 8 a.m.

The Junior skiers once again brought some fire and both skied into the finals in their respective races. Junior Girls Annika Gervais, Kailey Hoare, Quinn Hamilton and Anika Suke brought their speed and grit to knock another seven seconds off their heat time and race into fourth place in the final after the starting skier from the number one ranked Nepean was late to the line.

Junior Boys Tristan Humphries, Alex Lee, Duncan Evans-Fockler and Kip Kelly also shaved 16 seconds from their heat time to secure a fifth-place final finish. Three of these skiers are in Grade 9.

The Senior Girls team battled hard and hung on to their ninth-place position out of 16 teams, disappointingly missing the final by one spot. Senior Boys moved up from 13th to place 10th in the relay out of 21 teams.

HHSS Coaches Karen Gervais and Mike Rieger want the thank community coaches Joleen Thomas, Judy Suke and Kevin Hoare for their support of the team; community members for volunteering at our races this year and contributing to our fundraising efforts; as well as the hard-working groomers at Glebe Park for the many hours spent maintaining the trails and preparing them for races.

The coaches would also like to acknowledge the commitment of the Grade 12 skiers who were instrumental in reviving the Nordic program at Hal High and growing it into a highly successful team that saw 21 skiers compete at OFSAA this year.

Full results can be found on zone4.ca under 2026 OFSAA.

Senior Boys Nordic Team: from left, Brady Hamilton, Owen Megrah-Poppe, Winston Ramsdale, Carter Sisco, Evan and Graham Backus gather at Hardwood Hills during the OFSAA Nordic Skiing Championships. /submitted

The HHSS Junior Girls Nordic team of Kailey Hoare, Anika Suke, Annika Gervais and Quinn Hamilton captured 8th in the team Interval races and flew to 4th in the 4x1km Sprint Relay. /submitted

A little spring in their step

The Minden Skating Club presented their annual Spring Gala this past Sunday, March 1 at the S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena in Minden. Skaters of all ages took to the ice to showcase their season of growth, while a very full crowd cheered them on from the stands. /TIM YANO staff photographer

Community coming together to paint this spring

from page 1

confirming details needed to update downtown decor. "Our initiative is to take that block of buildings, and add paint," confirmed Woodcroft, referencing the location of the Water Street and Bobcaygeon Road intersection, and leading up to Pharmasave.

Woodcroft noted that step one was to confirm interest from business owners within that stretch. With that in place, they are now working with the township to ensure they are not violating any bylaws with the community paint, as well as contractors to make sure they have the necessary tools. "We're still in that phase of determining exactly what needs to be done," said Woodcroft. "We have presented a palette with a rendering for colours (to the business owners), and now we're onto palette two based on their feedback."

But the working group wants this to be a community event. "We want to get more people involved," said Woodcroft, "We want to work with the churches and the not-for-profits too, because everyone benefits from this."

The organization also noted that all are welcome to come help paint the town. With tentative painting dates set for April 18 and 25 (subject to change due to weather), the community is invited to partake in the experience. Paint and supplies will be provided, with flexible time blocks allowed. "Come for an hour or stay longer," reads the event poster, "every helping hand counts!"

> *"You can't start with the negativity. You have to keep trying to make it happen ...*
>
> — Dave Woodcroft, Minden Business Working Group

While the Minden Business Working Group is not a formal Business Improvement Area (BIA), the organization is working closely with the Haliburton Highlands Chamber of Commerce, as well as the Haliburton County Development Corporation to ensure they are implementing their procedures correctly and efficiently. Woodcroft noted that there are over 75 on their regular mailing list, with interest continuing to snowball via their social media channels.

Woodcroft believes that while a BIA isn't currently in the cards for the community, he thinks there is potential for the working group to organically evolve into a formal organization. "I've heard a bunch of times the old ' oh we've tried this a hundred times and it didn't work,' line," he said. "But you can't start with the negativity. You have to keep trying to make it happen."

When asked about backlash around the proposed initiatives, Woodcroft shared that there is "absolutely none." He noted that representatives from Minden council have attended their meetings, and he feels they are fully supporting the steps taken to ensure the projects are rolled out properly. "I think we have a really great relationship (with the town)," he said.

To get involved with painting the town, visit their "Life in Minden" pages on social media, or email mindenbusinesswg@gmail.com.

Township of Algonquin Highlands

2026 Municipal Election

Joint Compliance Audit Committee Members

The Corporations of the Township of Algonquin Highlands, the Township of Minden Hills, the Municipality of Dysart et al and the Municipality of Highlands East, are currently seeking interested applicants from professionals who are required to adhere to codes of standards of their profession, and other individuals with in depth knowledge of the campaign financing rules of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* for appointment to a **Joint Compliance Audit Committee.**

The Joint Compliance Audit Committee has full delegation of the authority in the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, to address applications requesting an audit of a candidate's election campaign finances. This authority includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Review applications and grant or reject audit requests
- Where an audit is granted, appoint an auditor and review the audit report
- Where indicated, decide whether legal proceedings shall be commenced.

The Joint Compliance Audit Committee will consist of members appointed by each Council. Committee members must have the ability to understand and apply the election campaign finance provisions of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and should be considered impartial with respect to their ability to fulfill their responsibilities. Preference shall be given to candidates that have applicable experience in accounting, law, law enforcement and academics from related fields.

Preferred Qualifications:

(a) Accounting and audit – accountants or auditors with experience in preparing or auditing the financial statements of municipal candidates;
(b) Academic – college or university professors with expertise in political science or local overnment administration;
(c) Legal; and
(d) Other individuals with knowledge of the campaign financing rules of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996.

Members of the public interested in serving on this Committee are asked to submit a resume, and covering letter, marked "Confidential" no later than Noon on March 6, 2026 to:

Vicki Bull, Clerk
Township of Minden Hills
Box 359, 7- Milne St., Minden, ON K0M 2K0

For further information, please contact Vicki Bull, Clerk by email at admin@mindenhills.ca

We thank all applicants for applying, but only the selected candidates will be contacted. Personal information and supporting material is collected and used in accordance with the ***Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.***

Township of Algonquin Highlands

PUBLIC NOTICE
Applicant: Reader / Asbil
Lot 21, Concession 4, Beech Lake
Geographic Township of Stanhope

WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Algonquin Highlands has declared part of the original shore road allowance in front of Lot 21, Concession 4, in the geographic Township of Stanhope, in the Township of Algonquin Highlands, County of Haliburton, to be surplus.

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Municipal Corporation of the Township of Algonquin Highlands proposes to enact a By-Law to stop-up, close and convey to the abutting property owner(s) that part of the original shore road allowance in front of Lot 21, Concession 4, described as all and singular that certain parcel or tract of land and premises situate, lying and being in the Geographic Township of Stanhope, in the County of Haliburton and being composed of the following:

FIRSTLY: THAT part of the original shore road allowance in front of Lot 21, Concession 4, described as Part 2 on a Plan deposited in the Registry Office for the Land Titles Division of Haliburton County as Plan 19R-11201.

The proposed By-Law will come before the said Council for consideration at its regular meeting at the Algonquin Highlands Municipal Office, 1123 North Shore Road, on **the 19th day of March, 2026** and at that time, the Council will hear in person or by his/her counsel, solicitor or agent any person who claims that his/her land will be prejudicially affected and who applies to be heard. Any person who wishes to be heard by Council regarding this proposed closure must contact the Clerk to schedule a delegation with Council.

Dated: March 3, 2026.

Sean O'Callaghan
Planner
Township of Algonquin Highlands
1123 North Shore Rd.
Algonquin Highlands, ON K0M 1S0
Tel: (705) 489-2379
Email: socallaghan@algonquinhighlands.ca

mindentimes.ca

MH passes updated fire bylaw

THOMAS SMITH

Staff Reporter

Minden Hills Fire Department visited council this past week for changes to the Establishing and Regulating (E and R) bylaw.

Don Kruger, Chief of Minden Hills Fire Department, presented to council at their meeting held on Thursday, Feb. 26.

Kruger sought council's support for the changes to the bylaw which would address changes in legislation since the last E and R bylaw was updated, remove redundancies and add swift water rescue and ropes/low angle rescues.

The latter rescue involves a situation in which the fire department uses a rope system for safety, balance, and assistance. This typically does not involve directly hauling patients or heavy objects during a rescue.

Section three of bylaw no. 26-24 discussed who can be qualified to be appointed to a meber of the Minden Fire Department.

Deputy Mayor Lisa Schell questioned the wording around a clean driver's abstract, seeking clarity on who could drive an emergency vehicle.

"I don't think there is going to be a hard and fast answer to that, yes or no, it would be on a case-by-case basis," said Kruger.

Chief Kruger assured them that any charges on their driving record would be taken into account before letting them behind the wheel.

Tammy McKelvey sought clarity on why swiftwater rescue was needed in the bylaw, before the entire fire service had the proper training.

"If we were to do that, we would have to redo this process. If we put it in the bylaw now, moving forward, we begin training," said Kruger.

Kruger says that as long as they are training, they can provide services without certification..

"I would highly recommend that we leave swift water in our bylaw. It also provides us risk protection as well," said CAO Cynthia Fletcher.

> ***"I would highly recommend that we leave swift water in our bylaw ...***
>
> — Cynthia Fletcher, Minden CAO

Councillor Tammy McKelvey asked about the old bylaw that discussed the rescue of pets and remains.

"We do not provide recovery services," said Kruger. "If, for example, we have a surface water or ice rescue call that unfortunately becomes a fatality, we do not go in to do a recovery, that would be the purview of the OPP."

Kruger clarified that they typically do not conduct animal rescues, however, people will sometimes go onto ice to attempt to rescue animals, and become in need for emergency rescue.

At the same meeting, council received the report regarding proposed bylaw No. 26-21 which dictates call out procedures for EMS response.

A tiered response within one minute of EMS dispatch will flow through levels of service from:

-Vital signs absent
-Unconsciousness
-Air compromisation
-Chest pain
-All high acuity calls with an ETA greater than 20 minutes
-All purple/red priority motor vehicle collisions with paramedic services attending

Council voted unanimously to approve of these changes.

2026 Municipal Election

Are you interested in being a Member of Council or School Board Trustee?

The Term of Council is 4 years!

Requirements under the ***Municipal Election Act***:

• Nomination Period:

• **May 1, 2026 to August 20, 2026** (regular business hours)

• **August 21, 2026** (9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.)

• **Candidates must submit signatures of 25 eligible voters, in their municipality, to support their nomination**. (not applicable for School Board Trustee(s))

For more information, please visit your local municipality's website or contact the Clerks Department.

Township of Algonquin Highlands 1123 North Shore Road Algonquin Highlands, ON K0M 1S0 Tel: 705-489-2379 Email: ahelection2026@algonquinhighlands.ca www.algonquinhighlands.ca Dawn Newhook, Municipal Clerk	Municipality of Dysart et al 135 Maple Avenue P.O. Box 389 Haliburton, ON K0M 1S0 Tel: 705-457-1740 www.dysartetal.ca Amanda Duncombe-Lee, Municipal Elections Coordinator
Municipality of Highlands East 2249 Loop Road P.O. Box 295 Wilberforce, ON K0L 3C0 Tel: 705-448-2981 www.highlandseast.ca/election/ Robyn Rogers, Municipal Clerk	Township of Minden Hills 7 Milne St P.O. Box 359 Minden, ON K0M 2K0 Tel: 705-286-1260 Toll Free: 1-844-277-1260 Email: elections@mindenhills.ca www.mindenhills.ca Vicki Bull, Municipal Clerk

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COUNCIL MEETINGS VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON

Council and Closed Session meetings are currently being conducted in-person (Council Chambers, 7 Milne St., Minden) and with electronic participation. The scheduled upcoming meetings are:

March 12 – Regular Council Meeting
March 26 – Regular Council Meeting

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by attending in-person or via the live-stream link.

WINTER PARKING

From Nov 1st to Apr 30th overnight parking is illegal from midnight to 8:00 a.m. on township roadways and parking lots. Parking in the turning circle of a cul-de-sac is prohibited during all hours. Vehicles parked in areas that interferes with snow removal will be towed away and/or ticketed at the owner's expense

MINDEN HILLS CULTURAL CENTRE

• Join us for the 3rd annual Archie Stouffer Student Art Exhibition on display until March 21 in the Agnes Jamieson Gallery. All are welcome. Admission is by donation.

• A selection of artwork from the Agnes Jamieson Gallery's permanent collection, as well as new acquisitions, is now on display. The Gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. All are welcome. Admission is by donation.

• We will host a free screening of *And We Knew How to Dance: Women in World War I* (1993) on Thursday, March 5 at 1:00 p.m. The documentary tells the stories of 12 Canadian women who worked in munitions factories and on farms during the First World War, stepping into roles traditionally held by men. Presented in collaboration with the Haliburton County Public Library. Admission is free. No pre-registration is required.

• The UnFinished Objects (UFO) craft group will meet on Friday, March 6 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Join other local crafters in the Welch Room to work on your neglected projects. All are welcome.

For information on all the programs and exhibits offered at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre: culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca or call 705-286-3763

www.mindenhills.ca
VOTE Minden Hills October 26, 2026
Municipal & School Board Election
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Your Election Team
Vicki Bull, Returning Officer — Lisa Fitton, Deputy Returning Officer — Hayley Phoenix, Election Assisstant

MARCH BREAK AT THE SG NESBITT MEMORIAL ARENA

• Join our March Break camp for the full week or single day.
• A Babysitters Course is scheduled for Tuesday March 17th from 9:00am-4:00pm for $40 for youth 11-15 years old.

• A Home Alone Safety for Kids Course is being offered on Friday March 20th from 9:00am-4:00pm for $40 for youth 9-12 years old.

• Extra drop-in skating times have been added to the schedule for the week and you can also sign up for Zoo To You coming for 2 different session on Monday March 16th.

Take a look at the full list of events online at www.mindenhills.ca/recreation

7 Milne Street, PO Box 359, Minden, ON K0M 2K0 705-286-1260 Toll Free: 1-844-277-1260 Fax 705-286-4917 Township.Minden.Hills Minden Hills@twpmindenhills @Township_MindenHills

Sports Hall of Fame celebrates local legends

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

Celebrating local stars is about to get a lot easier.

Every two years, the Haliburton Highlands Sports Hall of Fame (HHSHoF) hosts an induction ceremony, to celebrate the accomplishments of community members making a significant contribution to sports.

"They're all people who have benefitted from sport," said Hall of Fame committee member Roger Trull, "and sport has benefitted from them."

In 2018, Scott LaRue gathered a group together to discuss the importance of highlighting local athletes and contributors. By 2019, the organization became part of the Haliburton County Community Co-operative, and began seeking a permanent home for the display.

While navigating through the complexities of the COVID-19 pandemic, the idea was successful in maintaining momentum; powering forward with Zoom committee meetings and facilitating a nomination process.

The Municipality of Dysart et al granted permission for the hall to showcase their display on the stage at the A.J. LaRue Community Centre, above the local arena. "The HHSHoF does not see this space in the long-term as a permanent home," reads their website, "but as a public space in a well-used public building it will serve as a good beginning."

In a post-pandemic world, the committee was able to offer a ceremony in both 2022 and 2024, each time welcoming over 400 attendees to celebrate the inductees. With a ceremony every two years, ensuring appropriate time to gather and research nominees, the next event is slated for Saturday, May 23 at 2 p.m.

There are four categories of nominees, starting with Athletes. "These are people inducted based on their outstanding contributions in their fields," shared Trull. "People who really distinguished themselves in their careers."

Secondly, the HHSHoF celebrates Builders. Trull noted that these are individuals or groups that have built up athletes and sports in many fields. "People who really made a difference," he said. "Really contributed to sports in Haliburton."

Next the organization seeks to celebrate Teams. "These are teams who have competed and been successful beyond Haliburton County," confirmed Trull.

And lastly, in a new category designed for this year, the HHSHoF will be celebrating "Outstanding Achievement" awards. "There are groups of people in sport who do not necessarily fit into the other three categories," said Trull, "but they really deserve the recognition for their contributions to our community."

The 2026 inductees for the Haliburton Highlands Sports Hall of Fame as as follows:

Athletes:

Jonathan Bishop
Wendy Bolt (Gough)
Julia Fedeski
Paul Madden
Chris Petrow

Builders:

Bob and Noreen Bishop
Helen Burk
Neil Burk
Jane Symons

Teams:

1978-1979 HHSS Redmen Football Teams
1980-1988 Minden Rockcliffe Hustlers

Outstanding Achievement Awards:

Boshkung Lake Skiers 1960s
Haliburton County Ladies Softball League 1960-1990

The *Haliburton Echo* and the *Minden Times* will be running profiles on each of the inductees leading up to the induction ceremony on May 23. All are welcome to attend the community event.

Racing for a cause

The CASC's Ice Racing team donated $1,000 to the Minden Community Food Centre this weekend. A part of the funds raised were through their ice taxi program. /Submitted

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Mark your calendars

The Highlands Little Theatre production of *Calendar Girls* is set to run March 24-28 at the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion. With lots of laughs, heartfelt moments, and witty dialogue, the show will be sure to entertain audiences. /ADAM FRISK staff

HALIBURTON COUNTY HUSKIES

It's official, the Haliburton County Huskies are headed to the playoffs. With the last game of the regular season on Feb. 28 in Minden, the Huskies dominated the Stouffville Spirit with a score of 4-1. The home team is holding their fifth position in the East Conference heading into playoffs, with 71 points over the duration of the 56 game season. With the high scoring game over Stouffville, who currently rank second in the conference, the Huskies seem well equipped headed into the playoff season. Games are set to start in early March. /TIM YANO staff photograph

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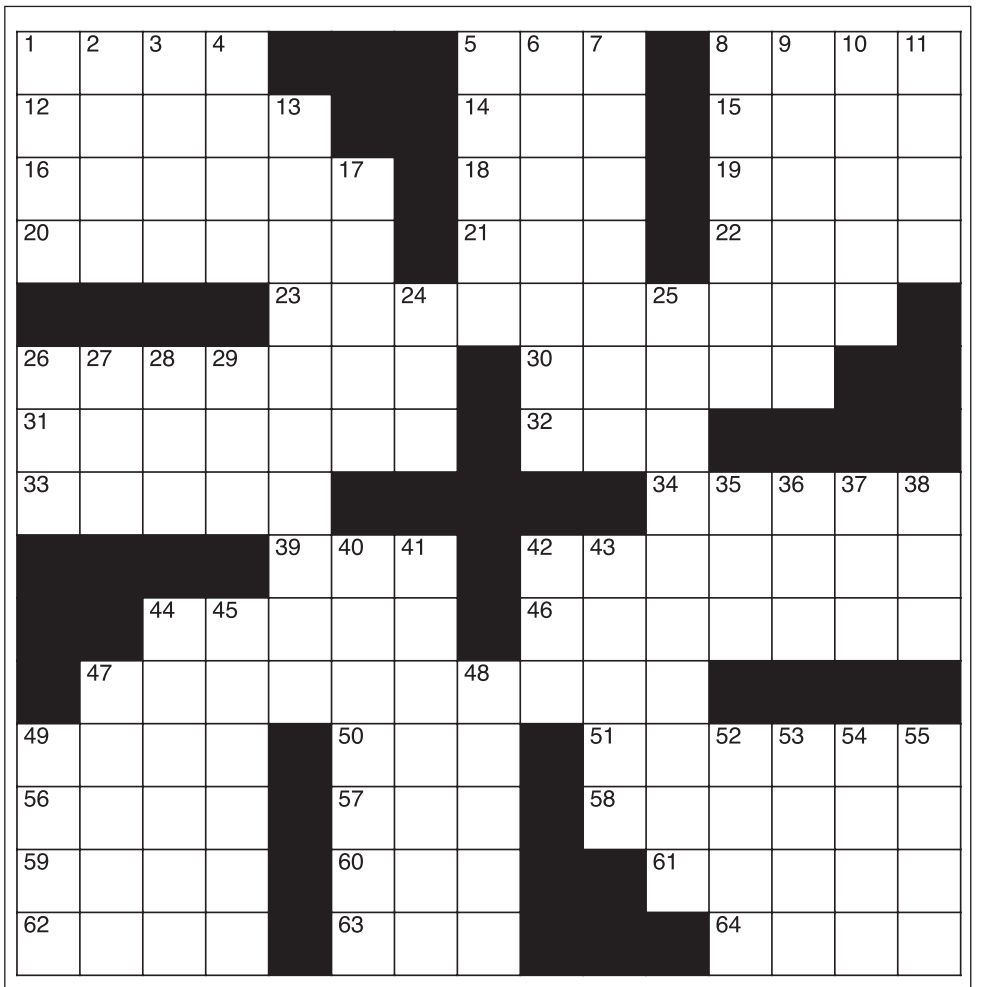

CLUES ACROSS

1. Unit of dry measure
5. One who defies authority
8. Social media giant
12. Render holy
14. 'Much __ about nothing'
15. Computer manufacturer
16. Creed
18. Immoral act
19. Mountain pass
20. Winged nut
21. Don't know when yet
22. Elected officials
23. Corrupt tendencies
26. Popular adult beverage
30. Made a mistake
31. Morally correct
32. Type of whale
33. Portable conical tent
34. Native people of the Congo
39. More (Spanish)
42. Classroom implements
44. Cognizant of
46. One who tells
47. Free from bondage
49. Thick piece of something
50. Containing two adjacent nitrogen atoms
51. Removed from the record
56. Legendary singer Turner
57. Broke up the earth
58. Hunting expedition
59. Contributes
60. Unit of work or energy
61. Wreckage on the sea bed
62. Affirmative! (slang)
63. Witness
64. Scrape (Archaic)

CLUES DOWN

1. '__ and flows'
2. Humble request for help
3. A position of leadership
4. Continent
5. Adherent of a particular religion
6. Things that can be eaten
7. Self-governing Netherlands territory
8. Long-tailed crow
9. Repeated
10. Bluish greens
11. Humanities
13. Someone who serves in the armed forces
17. Labor (Spanish)
24. Zero
25. Shared by involving three parties
26. Queens ballplayer
27. Consumed
28. Rest here please
29. Men's fashion accessory
35. American time
36. Sound unit
37. They __
38. Soviet Socialist Republic
40. Places to play video games
41. A sudden attack of illness
42. When you hope to arrive
43. Charges
44. Actress Seyfried
45. A tributary of the Ohio River
47. Omit when speaking
48. Armored fish
49. Remain
52. From a distance
53. Adventure story
54. Geological times
55. Eat dinner

Answers on page 20

Brought to you by

SUDOKU

		5			8	3		6
	9	3	2			7		5
			9			2		
6		1		5	2		8	
5			8	9	3			
2			1				7	
	1	6						4
3				8				
4			3		9	6		

Level: Beginner

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Answers on page 20

U–Links 2026 celebration of research

U-Links Centre for Community-Based Research is holding its annual Celebration of Research from 11 to 3:30 on Saturday, March 28 at the Haliburton Legion. This year, we have 42 research posters on display, Trent student presentations on their research initiatives and a keynote and panel discussion on 'Sustainable Agriculture and Community Well-Being'. All interested are welcome to attend.

For more than 25 years, U-Links has been operating in Haliburton County for the benefit of citizens, businesses, organizations and local government. U-Links works in all sectors – cultural, social, business and environmental – to solve problems and answer research questions brought forward by the community. This is done by engaging students and professors from Trent University and other academic partners. The students get a great dose of experiential education while conducting their research, and U-Links community partners get their questions answered or problem solved.

U-Links also operates the Woodlands and Waterways EcoWatch Program (WWEW), the goal of which is to monitor the long-term health of the County's lakes and forests. WWEW collects and analyzes biological, chemical and water quality data on 50 County lakes and monitors 41 permanent forest sample plots with the support of many Lake Associations, the County of Haliburton and other organizations. Student researchers are an important component of this long-term data collection effort.

This year at the Celebration of Research, 42 student research posters will be on display and in addition, eight Trent students have been selected to give oral presentations on their research. Topics addressed will include 'Viability of Artificial Loon Nesting Platforms' (students Cate Crawford-Thompson and Ellise Morgan), 'A Study on the Feasibility of an Underground Greenhouse' (Laura Scrivener), 'An Assessment of Carbon Stocks for the Haliburton Highlands Land Trust' (Sam Winterbottom), 'Delineating the Velocity of Climate Change for the Haliburton Highlands Land Trust' (Javed Bentley), 'The impact of Recreation Trails on Soils and Vegetation in the Deciduous Forests of southern Ontario' (Tristan Tschinkel) and 'A Feasibility Study of a Municipal Biodigester' (Florence Bergeron and Lenore Reid).

Student presentations will once again be supplemented this year by a Keynote Speaker, followed by a panel discussion. Dr. Karen Thompson of Trent University is the keynote, speaking on the broad topic of 'Sustainable Agriculture and Community Well-Being'. She will be joined by panelists Sue Tiffin, (County of Haliburton), Jennifer Semach (Walkabout Farm) and Godfrey Tyler (Waverly Brook Farm), all of whom will offer local perspectives on the above topic.

"U-Links is excited to invite you to our 2026 Celebration of Research, which highlights all of the hard work Trent and Guelph University student researchers have done on research projects right here in Haliburton County," says Andy Gordon, U-Links Director. "The student projects are unique to Haliburton County, and their contributions help make the County a better place to live and work. Please come, enjoy, get informed and put your tough questions to the students. This is going to be a super day, and I know the students will really appreciate the support of the local community."

The event is free to attend (although donations are welcome) and a light lunch and refreshments will be served. Please register in advance, so that U-Links can get an idea of the number of attendees for planning purposes. Registration is available at www.ulinks.ca by clicking on 'Celebration of Research 2026'. Additional information can be obtained by emailing admin@ulinks.ca.

Last year, over 150 people were in attendance. Reserve your spot early.

Quote from a past project host:

"What have I experienced with U-Links researchers? Giant smiles, over the top enthusiasm, and incredible knowledge – even when ankle deep in mud, hanging over the side of a boat gathering water samples or elbow deep in plants, scooping up pollinator insects. U-Links research projects have added valuable depth to Haliburton County Master Gardener projects and inform the Halls and Hawk Lakes Property Owners Association with excellent water quality monitoring programs. With high quality research reports and a library of relevant and useful past project material, U-Links is a community resource that I value very highly and greatly appreciate. Thank you for what you do both for our region and for students!"

- Shelley Fellows, Project Host, Haliburton County Master Gardeners, and Halls and Hawk Lakes Property Owners Association.

U-Links operates as part of the charitable organization, Trent Centre for Community-Based Education and in partnership with the Haliburton County Community Co-operative.

Additional Information: Contact: Daniela Pagliaro, Admin and Logistics Co-ordinator, 705-286-2411 or admin@ulinks.ca

Submitted

www.haliburtonchamber.com 705-457-4700 admin@haliburtonchamber.com

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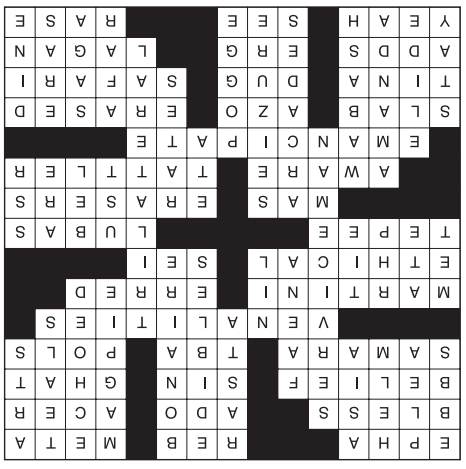

SUDOKU SOLUTION

1	2	5	4	7	8	3	9	6
8	9	3	2	6	1	7	4	5
7	6	4	9	3	5	2	1	8
6	3	1	7	5	2	4	8	9
5	4	7	8	9	3	1	6	2
2	8	9	1	4	6	5	7	3
9	1	6	5	2	7	8	3	4
3	7	2	6	8	4	9	5	1
4	5	8	3	1	9	6	2	7

THANK YOU

THANK-YOU

The family of the late Judy Carpenter would like to express a special thank you to our wonderful family and friends.

Your words of kindness and thoughtfulness have brought us comfort during this challenging time of loss.

We genuinely appreciate the phone calls, messages, cards, and lovely food delivered to our home. It has helped us immensely and meant so much.

To all the compassionate staff and friends at Hyland Crest. We sincerely thank you from the bottom of our hearts. The love, and kindness provided during our dear Wife/Mom "Judy's" stay was absolutely exceptional!

Also, a thank you to Barry, Kirsten, and staff at Gordon A. Monk's Funeral Home for their professional guidance, support, and assistance to our family. We are so thankful to you all for your warmth and kindness.

Albert Scott Carpenter and Rich
Angie and Josh Chapple

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ROBERTS, Gordon Gary

peacefully with family by his side at Owen Sound Hospital on Sunday, February 22, 2026. Gary Roberts of Sauble Beach in his 82nd year. Beloved husband of Edie for 56 years. Cherished father of Drew (Val) of Baden. Much loved grandfather of Liam and Lennon. Dear brother-in-law of Joan MacDonald (Archie) of Ottawa, James McDonald of Cargill and Shirley McDonald of Terra Cotta. Missed by many nieces, nephews and grand nieces and nephews. Predeceased by his parents Adeline (nee Cameron) and Norman Roberts, sister Francis and brother-in-law Douglas McDonald.

Gary's first love was Driftwood Bay at Redstone Lake where he spent many hours hunting and fishing. He lived a very active lifestyle enjoying golfing, curling and hockey in his early years. He was also so very proud of his career as an agronomist which he described as rewarding as it allowed him to help farmers.

Arrangements entrusted to the **DOWNS AND SON FUNERAL HOME,** Hepworth. Expressions of remembrance to the Canadian Cancer Society, Brightshores Owen Sound Hospital Foundation, Waterloo Regional Health Network Foundation or the Heart and Stroke Foundation would be appreciated. Messages of condolence may be sent to the family through www.downsandsonfuneralhome.com

John R. Miller

Heaven just got a beautiful new voice

With deep love and remembrance, the family of John R. Miller announces his peaceful passing on February 23, 2026, at the age of 87.

Born on July 9, 1938, in Kincardine, Ontario, John was the 4th of 5 children born to Dorothy Farrell and Ralph Miller. John was educated in Kincardine and later enrolled in Stratford Teachers College. He then taught in Toronto, Stratford, Northern Quebec, Fraserdale (Smooth Rock Falls), and finally, Haliburton in 1973.

Beyond his many musical and professional accomplishments, John lived a life deeply rooted in his Christian Faith and a love of Nature and Humanity. His beliefs were not just spoken but lived out through qualities of generosity, integrity, kindness, stewardship, and the way he lifted others with music, laughter, and inclusivity. Whether walking his dog Thomas by himself or playing music for crowds and directing traffic, he found joy in both solitude and connection, as well as a true desire to serve.

John is survived by his loving wife, Jane (Dobbyn) of Comber, Ontario, and has left behind their children, Lisa (Jay Marchant) and Kent. Also remembered by Grandchildren Keylan Marchant, Jaimie (Spencer), and Margaret (Ben). He is predeceased by his sisters Helen Thomas and Joan Taylor and survived by his oldest sister, Marion Mackay, and younger brother, Don Miller. He was loved by many fabulous in-laws, cousins, nieces, and nephews.

"Every life is noted and is cherished, and nothing loved is ever lost or perished." — Madeleine L'Engle.

Community Funeral Home

www.communityfuneralhomes.com

CELEBRATION OF LIFE
As per John's request, cremation has taken place. A Celebration of Life will be held in John's honour on Saturday, May 16, 2026, at 11:00 am at the **HALIBURTON UNITED CHURCH**, 10 George St, Haliburton, ON K0M 1S0. As an expression of sympathy, donations in John's memory can be made to The Haliburton 4Cs Food Bank, Woodlands Wildlife Sanctuary, or Places for People. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the **HALIBURTON COMMUNITY FUNERAL HOME**, 13523 Hwy. #118 Haliburton, ON K0M 1S0 (705) 457-9209.

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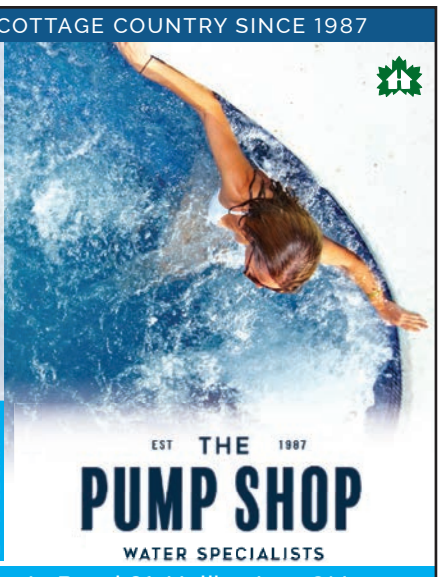
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Snowdon issues ultimatum

Threatens to call in the restructuring commissioner

by Andrew Milne

Snowdon will not call in a provincial Municipal Affairs commissioner to make restructuring decisions for the local governments.

Yet.

Snowdon councillors voted at a meeting last week to delay the decision to call in the commissioner for six weeks, to give the county a chance to demonstrate that it is serious about restructuring.

County councillors from across the county — including Dysart reeve/county warden Murray Fearrey and Anson, Hindon and Minden reeve Jeanne Anthon — were present for what was formally a local Snowdon municipal meeting, and participated in the discussion.

The provincial commissioner, once called in, would have the power unilaterally to impose restructuring measures — up to and including the amalgamation of local governments.

As reeve George Simmons and deputy-reeve Ross Rigney explained it, the motion was an expression of Snowdon's frustration with a perceived lack of commitment on the part of the county body to get on with realistic restructuring efforts.

Said Rigney, "I must say that there's a lot of disbelief in me about whether or not there's the heart and the political will on the will council to do it. I know that on an individual basis people have a lot of opinions. I must say that I think you've had two good years of a lot of debate, going back to Bark Lake. And there was always that sense that we were going to come out of that debate and were going to move ahead. But where are we today?"

Discussions on local government restructuring were largely driven from the outset by serious cuts and changes to the way the province provides transfer grants to local governments. Though the process started with players considering as options amalgamating some local governments, eliminating the lower tier governments in favour of one county government, or, conversely, eliminating the county government level, the discussion mostly seemed to eliminate, over time those options, in favour of attempting to find efficiencies within the existing legal structures. In an odd deal brokered by Fearrey at the county level but paid for by separate municipal governments, consultant David Barber was brought in to help find those efficiencies.

(more on page 3)

Snug as a bug in a quincy

Mike Smith, Cheryl Smith, Daniel Walker, Chantel Smith and Donelda Smith spent a night last week in a quincy — an igloo-like structure constructed of piled snow — they built in their backyard. Donelda has built the structures as part of a program at Kinark, where she works. They report that, heated with a candle, the quincy was entirely comfortable — even cosy.

School board waiting nervously for April

by Andrew Milne

A mere month before nominations for trustee positions would normally open, Haliburton County's Board of Education is drifting in an uneasy limbo.

Effectively stripped of much of its power, along with all other boards in the province pending the upcoming amalgamation proposed in provincial legislation, the board, it would seem, can do very little but wait for the word from the province on many significant decisions.

Director Brad Saunders said at the board's regular meeting last week, "That's the irony of this whole piece. Someone asked at a meeting just last week — aren't there a lot of things being decided?

"Absolutely not. There is nothing being decided, because there is no basis for making decisions. I can't recall for an awfully long time in our business when we've had a period of quiet such as this. Because you simply don't have the capacity to make decisions. I look around this table, and what are you? You're basically a decision making body. What can you do when your ability to make a decision has been put on hold."

Board officials including Saunders himself have been trying to get some idea of what's happening and when, from officials at the Ministry of Education, but, says Saunders, the answers have not been forthcoming.

"It seems very, very clear that the politicians have asked their staffs to keep their lips very tightly sealed about whatever is going to happen after April 1."

The lengthy piece of legislation at the centre of all of this — the province's Bill 104 — the Fewer School Boards Act — will be in committee hearings up until the third week of this month. On the fourth week, it will go back to the house to become law.

Until that happens, however, the government doesn't seem to be prepared to answer the specific questions on implementation boards might have. The answer to most questions on local decisions — can a board proceed with building a school? what happens to boards' reserves and debts? even what will be the impact on taxes? — is that a local committee will decide. For the bigger questions, even within what latitude those local committees will operate — the answer is that those committee's boss — the provincial level education restructuring committee, will be carrying the ball.

The local committees — there will, current plans are, be one per amalgamated board — haven't been appointed yet. The provincial committee is taking shape, but hasn't hired a CEO yet. And none of this is official until the bill is enacted — potentially as early as the end of this month, in time for the nomination process.

That has affected every aspect of what the board does — including, not too surprisingly, work proceeding towards smoothing the amalgamation itself.

Says chair Cheryl Murdoch, who met with Victoria's chair two weeks

(more on page 3)

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